

# Northview Preschool Parent Handbook



Revised August 2016

# WELCOME!

Welcome to our preschool program. We believe that parents and teachers need to work together and we are looking forward to an exciting school year. If you do not find the information you need in this handbook, please see a staff member and we will do our best to provide you with the information you need.

The preschool program is held at West Oakview Elementary School, 3880 Stuyvesant NE. The phone number is (616)361-3470.

We offer a Community Education preschool program. This is a tuition-based program which includes a choice of a 3 half-day (M/W/F) or a 2 half-day (T/TH) program in the morning or afternoon. Our morning session is from 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. The afternoon session is from 12:05 p.m. to 2:35 p.m.

We also offer a free 4 half-day (M/T/W/TH) program in mornings or afternoons for Northview residents who *qualify*. This program is called the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) and is funded by the State of Michigan.

Children in both preschool programs must be 4, but not 5, by **September 1<sup>st</sup>**.

## **MEET OUR STAFF**

Dan Heitzman, Administrator

Michelle Walsh and Laura Niedzielski, Building Administrative Assistants

Liz Maher, Social Worker

Ashley Ransom, GSRP Teacher

Tiffany Ryke, Community Ed Teacher

All staff employed by the Northview Public Schools have had a criminal background check (MI State Police and FIA).

## **VISION STATEMENT**

Our vision is to provide high quality early childhood experience for children.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Through a partnership with families, teachers and communities, our mission is to cultivate child centered, play-based environments that support critical thinking skills, develop positive self-concepts and facilitate independence and competence - all of which build the foundation for lifelong learning for children in the Northview Community Education Preschool Program.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

Young children learn through interaction with the environment by ongoing use of their senses and from manipulating objects. For these reasons, play is an important and integral part of our curriculum. The teacher strives to provide a rich learning environment to encourage active discovery of new experiences and ideas in all areas of development: social, emotional, intellectual and physical.

Our preschool is designed to be a pleasant, developmental experience. Our goal is to help your child acquire a positive attitude toward school and recognize his/her own unique abilities. The following objectives will be covered:

- Development of a positive self-concept
  - Understanding and accepting one's emotions
  - Gaining independence
  - Making appropriate choices and decisions
- Development of social skills
  - Understanding others
  - Accepting differences in others
  - Learning to share and function as part of a group

- Development of cognitive skills
  - Increasing attention span
  - Following directions
  - Pre-math skills
  - Pre-reading skills and literacy experiences
  - Beginning science skills, observation and exploration
  - Vocabulary development
  - Language experiences
  
- Development of physical skills
  - Large muscle development
  - Manipulative skills
  - Eye/hand coordination skills
  - Body awareness

In our preschool programs, you can expect to see:

- A healthy and safe environment
- Positive interactions among adults and children
- An environment that supports each child's individual characteristics and growth
- Planned learning activities and materials appropriate for young children
- Regular communication with parents
- Nutritious snacks

**ENROLLMENT FOR GREAT START READINESS PROGRAM (GSRP)**

This is a program funded by the State of Michigan. There is no cost. The children come to school four days a week, Monday through Thursday. Children must be 4, but not 5, by **September 1<sup>st</sup>** of the year they wish to attend. Children must also live within the Northview Public School district boundaries.

**Qualifying factors include your income level and possibly one or more of the following risk factors:**

- Low birth weight (less than 5  $\frac{1}{2}$  lbs)
- Developmentally immature (proof from professionals)
- Physical and/or sexual abuse and neglect (anyone in family)
- Nutritional deficiency (under-weight, over-weight, poor eater, WIC)
- Long-term or chronic illness (anyone in family with cancer, diabetes, etc. or child with asthma, severe allergies, chronic ear infections, etc.)
- Diagnosed handicapped condition (speech impaired, learning disabled, etc- child or family member is identified as handicapped)
- Lack of stable support system of residence
- Destructive or violent temperament (anyone in family)
- Substance abuse or addiction (anyone in family)
- Language deficiency or immaturity (speech problems)
- Non-English or limited English speaking household
- Family history of low school achievement or dropout (did not graduate)
- Family history of delinquency (incarceration, court system)
- Family history of diagnosed family problems (by a therapist or counselor)
- Low parental/sibling educational attainment or illiteracy
- Single parent
- Unemployed parent/parents
- Low family income (qualifies for free/reduced lunches in public school)
- Family density (many family members or crowded living conditions)
- Parental/sibling loss by death or parental loss by divorce
- Teenage parent (19 or younger when first child was born)
- Chronically ill parent or sibling (physical, mental, or emotional problems)
- Incarcerated parent
- Housing in rural or segregated area

**ENROLLMENT AND TUITION**  
**COMMUNITY EDUCATION PRESCHOOL PROGRAM**

Children must be 4, but not 5, on **September 1<sup>st</sup>** of the year they attend the program. A non-refundable \$25.00 registration fee is due at the time of enrollment to hold your child's place in the program.

Tuition for the year is:

3-day program (M/W/F).....\$1075.00/year

2-day program (T/TH).....\$ 865.00/year

Tuition can be paid in full when the program begins or by the semester, with one half due in August and the other half in January. ***If payments are not made on time you may be asked to withdraw your child from the program.*** Tuition payments can be made in the school office or mailed to West Oakview Elementary School, 3880 Stuyvesant NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525. Please make checks payable to **Northview Preschool**.

**REQUIRED PAPERWORK FOR ALL PROGRAMS**

The following paperwork is required prior to your child beginning the first day of preschool:

- Health form/immunization record (signed by physician)
- Information sheet
- Child Information card/field trip release form
- Picture release/directory release
- Licensing Notebook

GSRP students must also have:

- Proof of residence
- Copy of original birth certificate
- Proof of income
- GSRP application form

### **FIRST DAY OF PRESCHOOL**

The first day of school is an exciting time for you and your child. We try to make this change from home to school as easy as possible by creating a place that is comfortable and child sized. This will help children feel at ease. Our goals include helping children to help themselves, developing independence and increasing attention spans. Acquiring these skills will help your child have a successful first school experience and beyond. We begin guiding children toward these goals on day one. For some children, the change from home to school is tougher than for others. Generally, by the end of the first month, children get used to the school routine and become very comfortable.

You can help in the transition from home to school by making sure that your child gets a good night sleep and is on a regular routine at home. Tired children have a hard time learning. You can also help by showing interest and enthusiasm for school.

### **WITHDRAWAL FROM PROGRAM**

Parents may withdraw their child(ren) from the preschool at anytime. We ask for a two-week advance notice prior to withdrawal. A child who wishes to return to the program, will be placed on a waiting list until an opening is available. A child can also be asked to withdraw from the program due to lack of payment and behavioral problems.

### **PARENT and CLASSROOM INVOLVEMENT**

The parent involvement component of our program is based on the belief that the best environment for children exists when there is a close school-family partnership. There are many opportunities for families to be involved.

DO PLAN TO VISIT SCHOOL! Families of all children in the preschool program are strongly encouraged to visit our classroom. It can be difficult to find the time, but it is very important that you become directly involved in your child's education. Our only request is that you schedule a day and time with your child's teacher.

All volunteers are required to have a background check on file 2 weeks PRIOR to volunteering. This is to ensure that we meet our State Of Michigan preschool licensing requirements.

### **HOME VISITS**

All Great Start Readiness Program children will receive two home visits. The first is before your child starts school and the second is at the end of the school year. We bring activities to do with your child, discuss your concerns and talk about your child's experiences.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

We usually schedule two field trips per year, depending upon funding. There may be an additional cost for Community Education preschool program children and families. Parents are invited and encouraged to attend.

### **NEWSLETTER/CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION**

We will always take the time to talk to you whether in person, email or by telephone. We send home a bi-weekly newsletters with important events, dates, upcoming activities and things to practice at home.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

To protect the privacy of children and their families, we follow strict confidentiality laws. We do not release names, ages or personal information without written permission. Parents are expected to adhere to the confidentiality laws as well. Please respect the privacy of the other families by only discussing and sharing information about your own child.

### **REFERRALS TO PROTECTIVE SERVICES POLICY**

Child abuse and neglect are against the law. We are required by state law to report any and all cases of suspected child abuse or neglect within 24 hours to the Family Independence Agency.

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

We believe that children learn best through experiences. We believe that the staff must support, guide and redirect the children to help them learn to cooperate with other students. This allows children to have positive educational experiences which encourage and enhance their growth and development.

We believe that this can be accomplished through:

- **GROUP MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES**

Limiting the number of children in each area in the room avoids over crowding, allows for sufficient materials, allows the opportunity for constructive interactions and reduces opportunities for negative behaviors.

- **PROXIMITY**

Sometimes just saying a child's name or a touch on the shoulder can let a child know of your presence which will in turn put him/her back on task.

- **POSITIVE REDIRECTION**

If a behavior is inappropriate, we use redirection, which is teaching the child what behavior is expected. Sometimes we give children choices which in turn helps them choose appropriate behaviors.

- **CONSISTENCY**

We try to be as consistent with our classroom rules so that children will know what is expected of them. We find that this helps the children and leads to their success.

- **THINKING CHAIR**

After exhausting these methods, a child may be asked to sit in a thinking chair to reflect about what he/she has done. With the help of a teacher's discussion, a better way to interact with others, materials, toys, etc is discussed.

- **OUR PHILOSOPHY**

We do not use any form of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment.

*Parents are notified of any persistent behavior concerns.*

### **MEDICINE POLICY**

Whenever possible, please schedule the administration of medication for times when your child is at home. However, we do recognize the need that certain students may be required to take medications during the school day. Any child receiving medication, must have a completed permission physician's medication form on file. All non-prescription medications must be in original container with a written note from parents stating what it is for and how it is to be dispensed. The statement needs to be signed and dated to give the school permission to administer non-prescription medication. Please contact the school Building Administrative Assistants, Michelle Walsh or Laura Niedzielski at (616)361-3470 for a complete copy of policy and required forms.

### **SEVERE WEATHER POLICY**

Any changes in the school schedule or closing due to weather will be announced on the radio, television or district website ([www.nvps.net](http://www.nvps.net)). Click on school cancellation information. You may also enroll in *Instant Alert* through the district website to be notified by email, cell phone or PDA. If the Northview Public Schools cancels school there will be NO preschool classes. If the Northview district has a delay, there will be no AM preschool classes.

### **TORNADO WATCH/WARNING**

If a tornado watch has been issued prior to or during the regular dismissal time, students will be dismissed at the regular time. If an official tornado warning has been issued or a tornado appears; children will be retained at school in predetermined areas until the warning has lifted.

### **GRIEVANCE POLICY**

Northview Public Schools has a procedure for civil rights grievances. Any question should be directed to: Northview Public School, 4365 Hunsberger NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525 or call (616)363-6861.

### **HEALTH POLICY**

All young children get sick at some time. While we cannot guarantee that your child will not be exposed to illnesses from other children, we make it our goal to insure a positive, healthy school experience for all children. Parents will be asked to pick up their child if he/she demonstrates signs/symptoms of being ill.

#### **Please keep your child home until:**

**FEVER:** registers below 100 for 24 hours

**CONSTANT RUNNY NOSE:** thick yellow/green discharge clears up

**EARACHE:** a physician recommends returning

**RASH:** a physician determines cause and recommends returning

**SORE THROAT:** a physician determines non-contagious

**HARSH/SEVERE COUGH:** cough subsides

**RED/WATERY EYES:** eyes return to normal, no discharge

**UPSET STOMACH/DIARRHEA:** when no vomiting or diarrhea occurs for 24 hours and he/she is eating normally

**HEAD LICE:** hair must be nit FREE

*Thank you for complying with this Health Policy*

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Please call West Oakview School at (616)361-3470, whenever your child is absent. A child who is ill should not be in attendance. Please give the nature of your child's illness when calling the school. We also need to know if your child develops a communicable disease such as: whooping cough, measles, scarlet fever, chicken pox, etc. Chronic illnesses and allergies should be kept up-to-date in our records.

Students enrolled in the GSRP program need to attend on a regular basis. If a child does not attend for 10 days we will need a physician's statement or they will be dismissed from the program.

### **ACCIDENT POLICY**

If a minor injury occurs (scraped knee, elbow, etc.), the child is sent to the office. If a student is seriously hurt, he/she is made comfortable and the administrator will be contacted immediately. Parents will be called to pick up their child if needed. Emergency numbers are on file in the classroom and must remain up-to-date. Student accident forms must be filled out following an accident.

### **HAND WASHING PROCEDURE**

Hand washing is probably the most critical element in reducing the spread of germs. Children should learn about hand washing early in life to help them develop healthy habits. Children will be required to wash their hands before eating, after using the restroom, when returning from outdoors and other times as determined necessary by the staff. We ask that you encourage and reinforce this behavior to keep everyone as healthy as possible. Staff also follow this policy and wash their hands before and food preparation.

### **SNACK POLICY**

ALL CHILDREN ARE PROVIDED A MID SESSION SNACK EACH DAY. We encourage children to discover new foods and tastes. It is often milk, juice, crackers, fruits, vegetables, cheese and pretzels. Your child may bring in a special treat on his/her birthday. Special arrangements can be made with the child's teacher for celebrating birthdays that fall on school breaks. Food from home for the classroom needs to be prepared and packaged in a commercial kitchen (This is a licensing requirement).

**PLEASE NOTIFY THE TEACHER OF ANY FOOD ALLERGIES OR DIETARY NEEDS THAT YOUR CHILD MAY HAVE.**

### **CHILD CARE LICENSING INFORMATION**

This center maintains a licensing notebook of all licensing inspection reports, any special investigation reports issued and all related corrective action plans. This notebook will be available to parents for review during regular business hours. Licensing inspection and any special investigation reports from the past two years are available on the Bureau of Children & Adult Licensing website, located at [www.michigan.gov/michildcare.com](http://www.michigan.gov/michildcare.com)

### **TRANSPORTATION POLICY**

We do not provide transportation to or from school. Please park in our parking lot and walk your child to the preschool door. Children should not be released from a car without a parent/adult escort. Children will only be released to a parent/adult waiting on the sidewalk. Parents are asked to walk their child to the classroom door at drop off and pick them up at the classroom door at departure. Legally, we are unable to release a child to anyone other than a parent unless listed on the Child Emergency Information card. It is legal for either parent to pick up a child unless we have a copy of a court order restricting visitation.

**Classrooms doors will open promptly at session starting time.**

Please make sure your child is picked up promptly after class. Staff members have other obligations and cannot always remain in the classroom. Please notify school immediately if you will be late so we can reassure your child.

**STAFF CANNOT SUPERVISE CHILDREN WHO ARRIVE EARLY OR WHO ARE LEFT AT THE END OF THE SESSION.**

### **UPDATED CHILD INFORMATION**

Please keep all emergency contact information up-to-date, especially in the case of a move or change in employment. We need to have accurate information in case an emergency should arise.

### **OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES**

We try to go outside as much as the weather permits. PLEASE dress your child accordingly (coat, snow pants, gloves, hat, etc.). PLEASE label all clothing for easy identification, especially when seasons change.

### **PRESCHOOL DRESS/CLOTHING**

Learning in preschool can be messy. Your child may come home with paint, marker or something else on his/her clothing. PLEASE dress your child in washable clothing. Also, send an extra pair of clothing, including socks, pants, underwear, and a shirt (labeled with name) in case of a spill or accident.

### **BACKPACK**

We ask that your child bring a backpack to school daily. The children enjoy receiving their mail to take home. Notes that will come home may include: calendars, song sheets, book orders, picture order forms, parent education, event reminders, notifications and projects completed by your child. PLEASE check your child's backpack daily. We ask that your child's name be on the backpack to avoid confusion. Please keep in mind when backpack shopping, that some items coming home may be bigger than a piece of paper.

### **CLASSROOM PARTIES**

Throughout the year we have class parties. Please check the newsletter for more details.

### **SCHOOL CALENDAR**

The preschool year consists of a 33-week program (September through early May), an open house, orientation, parent nights, fall and spring conferences and graduation. On days when Northview is having a half-day in-service, the preschool programs will also operate a half-day schedule as well. Information on this will also be sent home in the newsletter. You may also check the Northview website for updated information ([www.nvps.net](http://www.nvps.net)).